



Learning Prayer Through **PSALMS**

**July 4 -
August 8**





LEARNING PRAYER

A STUDY

through Psalms

July 4 - August 8

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Written by TJ Johnson

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Learning Prayer Through Psalms

Prayer is a vital part of our relationship with God. And yet far too often most of us feel as the disciples when they admitted to Jesus that their prayer life was less than what it should have been, “Lord, TEACH us to pray.” Perhaps you have thought more than once, “If only God left us a prayer book for us to model our prayers on.” The good news is that He has. It’s called the Book of Psalms.

In the Psalms we have the words of man (the individual Psalmist laying his case before God) and the words of God (The Holy Spirit inspiring these prayers as models for the Church). This summer we will focus on four common prayers that all Christians pray (fear, pain, sin, and doubt) as a template for every other type of prayer that can be prayed. The series will open and close with two important components of prayer: praying according to Scripture and praying in Jesus’ name.

Join us as City Church seeks to go deeper in our relationship with God through prayer.

In Him,

Ps TJ Johnson



Learning Prayer Through Psalms

Wordy Prayer
Psalm 1

July 4



Wordy Prayer

Psalm 1

1 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; 2 but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. 4 The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; 6 for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

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The book of Psalms opens (Chapter 1) with an introduction of sorts. It is a reminder that what you are about to read is God's Word to us. It calls us to delight in His Word, to meditate upon His Word, and to bear the fruit of His Word. This is my prayer for you this summer.

As we journey through these Psalms we are tasked by God Himself with delighting, meditating and bearing fruit. This particular study will use the Psalms as a prayer guide. In the first week we want to remind ourselves that the greatest prayers we can pray are prayers that have been formed through Scripture. As an apprentice observes the master craftsman's every move and then is invited into the task of doing WITH THE MASTER, so too we have been invited to not only listen to Holy Spirit inspired prayers, but join in with our own words and emotions.

Praying the Word with you,

Pastor TJ



*His delight is in the law of the Lord*

## Discussion Questions

1. What was the best advice you have received in your life? Who gave it to you? What was the worst advice you have received in your life?
2. How often do you go to God for advice and where can this advice be found?
3. Read verses 1 and 2 and discuss what is the difference between the way of the wicked and the way of God.
4. The Bible teaches that we do not “walk in the way of the wicked” (see Prov. 4:14, 15, Jer. 15:17, Prov. 1:22). Why do you think this is so important to God?
5. What does the word “delight” mean? What are the things that make you happy, get you excited on a daily basis?
6. Why do you think the Psalmist says that the righteous man finds his delight in the law of the Lord?
7. How does meditating on God’s law “day and night” look for you in your daily prayer life?
8. Read verse 3 and discuss the meaning of the Psalmist’s metaphors.



*His delight is in the law of the Lord*

## Discussion Questions

9. What role does the Word of God play in our prayer life?
10. What makes up the majority of your prayer requests? Do you pray mainly for yourself, your family or loved ones? For your workplace? Do you pray for people without telling them you are praying for them?
11. As you discuss the wicked chaff and righteous trees, how can we be certain we are trees and not chaff?
12. As you discuss the two ways of life in verses 4 and 5, how can we be sure that we do not end up like the wicked?
13. How can we apply the knowledge about the way of the righteous to our daily prayer life?
14. What does your “dream” prayer life look like?





*His delight is in the law of the Lord*

## Discussion Questions

15. Pray Psalm 1 at the end of the Bible Study for yourself and for one another. Here is the sample on how you can pray to make the prayer from Psalm 1 your own.

*Oh Father, keep wickedness far from me. Protect my heart from the lures of sin and evil. Tie it as a tether to your Word that I might delight in You alone.*

*Give me the strength, time, and desire to read your Word and live your Word, to see it as the greater blessing.*

*I know your Word is water to my soul, so open my eyes to your Word today, that I might grow deep roots. I want to be near you and not be driven far away from you.*

*Jesus, You are the Word come to life. You are the reason I can stand before God on judgment day. You are the reason I can be called righteous. Thank you for saving me. I delight in you. I follow your path, even when it is dark and lonely, for it is the path of life.*

*Amen.*



## Prayer & Praise

*His delight is in the law of the Lord*

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

### Prayer Requests

### Praise Reports



# *Learning Prayer Through Psalms*

*Afraid of the Dark*  
*Psalm 3*

**July 11**





# Afraid of the Dark

## Psalm 3

1 O Lord, how many are my foes! Many are rising against me; 2 many are saying of my soul, "There is no salvation for him in God." Selah. 3 But you, O Lord, are a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head. 4 I cried aloud to the Lord, and He answered me from His holy hill. Selah. 5 I lay down and slept; I woke again, for the Lord sustained me. 6 I will not be afraid of many thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around. 7 Arise, O Lord! Save me, O my God! For you strike all my enemies on the cheek; you break the teeth of the wicked. 8 Salvation belongs to the Lord; your blessing be on your people! Selah.

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The Psalms are full of raw emotion; emotions we all share in. One such emotion that the Psalms give expression to is fear. I don't mean the type of fear a child has over some imaginary boogeyman hiding under the bed. I mean fear whose object is very real and very dangerous. Fear of a broken marriage, loss of job, releasing your children into the world, exploitation, etc.

The Psalms teach us that our very real fears are opportunities to trust in one larger than ourselves. Fear is a dangerous thing. It robs us of sleep. It gives us ulcers. It makes us act irrational. It keeps us from the joy of the Lord. As one of the hymn writers once wrote, "Oh, what peace we often forfeit, Oh, what needless pain we bear, All because we do not carry, Everything to God in prayer."

Taking my fears to God in prayer with you,

Pastor TJ



Salvation belongs to the Lord

Discussion Questions

1. Share with the group your biggest childhood fear. Were you able to conquer it and how?
2. Of the four initial responses to problems mentioned in the sermon (ignore, internalize, inform others, pray) which do you most identify with and why?
3. What is the spiritual and physical attack David is facing and how does he address both with prayer?
4. How have you seen the physical influence the spiritual (and vice versa) in your own life?
5. What are some ways you can identify with David's troubles?
6. Read verse 3. What does it mean that God was David's shield, glory, and lifter of his head? Share with the group a time when God was that for you.
7. In David's time, the Ark of the Covenant was where the presence of God and His glory dwelled. Where does God's glory dwell now? What effect does it have on Christians today in times of trouble?
8. Share with the group a time your troubles brought dishonor or shame. How did God help you?



Salvation belongs to the Lord

Discussion Questions

9. What does it look like to trust in God and not in ourselves in times of trouble?
10. What is the danger of attaching our own opinion about God to our needs?
11. What are the attributes or actions of God that have helped you get through recent troubles? Share with the group how God's personhood spoke into your situation.
12. Read verse 7-8 and identify the three groups of people he prays for and what he asks for each group. How can we apply this to our own prayer life?
13. Read verses 5 and 6, as well as James 1:6-7. What is David's attitude in the midst of his trouble?
14. Considering your current troubles, think about how can you practically demonstrate faith in your prayer?
15. When you look at Psalm 3 as a whole, what is the suggested order/structure to pray to God?
16. Take some time to pray using the prayer structure above over yourself or someone else in the group.



Prayer & Praise

Salvation belongs to the Lord

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

Prayer Requests

Praise Reports



Learning Prayer Through Psalms

*Painful Prayer
Psalm 22*

July 18



Painful Prayer

Psalm 22

1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? 2 O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest. 3 Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. 4 In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. 5 To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame. 6 But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people. 7 All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads; 8 "He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!" 9 Yet you are he who took me from the womb; you made me trust you at my mother's breasts. 10 On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother's womb you have been my God. 11 Be not far from me, for trouble is near, and there is none to help. 12 Many bulls encompass me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me; 13 they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion. 14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; 15 my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death. 16 For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet — 17 I can count all my bones — they stare and gloat over me; 18 they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots. 19 But you, O LORD, do not be far off! O you my help, come quickly to my aid! 20 Deliver my soul from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dog! 21 Save me from the mouth of the lion! You have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen! 22 I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you: 23 You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him, and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel! 24 For he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, and he has not hidden his face from him, but has heard, when he cried to him.

Painful Prayer

Psalm 22

25 From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will perform before those who fear him. 26 The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the LORD! May your hearts live forever! 27 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you. 28 For kingship belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations. 29 All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, even the one who could not keep himself alive. 30 Posterity shall serve him; it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation; 31 they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn, that he has done it.

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What do you pray when the pain is so overwhelming that you can't formulate words? What do you pray when your pain is only increased by the seeming silence of heaven? What do you pray when Satan's strikes seem endless?

One good place to start is to pray what Jesus prayed in the midst of His greatest pain. But remember, prayer is more than words, it is a mindset, a sometimes unspoken communication between you and your heavenly Father. So this week as we study Psalm 22, we will look at more than just the words we speak and explore the thoughts we must think in our prayers of pain.

Pastor TJ



*He has done it*

## Discussion Questions

1. What is your favorite worship song to sing at church, and why?
2. What are some sufferings you've experienced recently in your life?
3. Read verse 1. What are the examples of suffering in the Bible?
4. What was the result of Jesus suffering on the cross for us?
5. Read verses 3 & 4. Using the Bible, give some examples of God's faithfulness toward His children?
6. Read verse 8. Share a time when you were mocked for your faithfulness to God and how you responded?
7. Read verses 9 & 10. What is some evidence of God's faithfulness in your life?
8. How did Jesus standing on God's promise affect His attitude towards suffering on the cross? How can we change our attitude towards suffering using Jesus' example?





*He has done it*

## Discussion Questions

9. What is the main pattern in the prayer of David in verses 1 to 10? How might this prayer practically look in your own life?
10. Read verses 11 to 21. How would you summarize David's petition in this prayer?
11. Read verses 11 to 21 again and go verse by verse to identify the similarities that Jesus experienced on the cross with what King David wrote in this portion of Psalm 22.
12. Looking at verses 22 to 31, what would be the Biblical result of going through suffering? How does this psalm help us to see the outcome of personal trial?
13. What is the result of Jesus' suffering on the cross for you personally, your neighbor, coworker, or any person in Beijing and the whole world? How does Jesus' death on the cross make Him worthy of worship worldwide?
14. Psalm 22 is written by King David, but it is a prophecy of what Jesus would experience on the cross almost one thousand years later. As Jesus on the cross brought glory to God, can your suffering bring glory to God?



## Prayer & Praise

*He has done it*

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

### Prayer Requests

### Praise Reports



# *Learning Prayer Through Psalms*

*Secrets Revealed*  
*Psalm 32*

**July 25**



# Secrets Revealed

## Psalm 32

1 Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. 3 For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. 4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah 5 I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah 6 Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found; surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him. 7 You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance. Selah 8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you. 9 Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding, which must be curbed with bit and bridle, or it will not stay near you. 10 Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the LORD. 11 Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

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"I'm sorry, please forgive me." It's a phrase that isn't used often enough. But, for true confession to be made we must go deeper than some generic shotgun splatter prayer. What does confession really look like? What does it...SOUND like?

The Psalms teach us a few certain things. Firstly, that we are sinners. Secondly, that sin is bad...really bad. Thirdly, that God hates sin. Fourthly, that even though God eternally hates sin, He infinitely loves sinners. Therefore, the Psalms teach us how to come to a holy, forgiving God and through prayer renew our relationship with Him.

Confessing with you,

Pastor TJ



Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven

Discussion Questions

1. Share the story from your childhood, when you were trying to hide something you have done wrong from your parents, but they still found out about it.
2. Read Psalm 32:1 & Romans 4:7-8. What is the Biblical definition of being “blessed”? What is the worldly meaning of being “blessed”?
3. What is the definition of sin? What does the Bible say about sin? What does God think about sin?
4. Can a person be blessed/happy and have sin in their life at the same time? What are your thoughts on that?
5. What is one of the roles of the Holy Spirit regarding sin? Is it possible for a Christian to grieve and quench the Holy Spirit?
6. What are examples from the Bible you can think of when people refused to confess their sin? Read verses 3&4. What happens when Christians refuse to confess their sin?
7. Read verse 5. How often do we have to confess our sin? How often do you practice confession of your sins to God?



Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven

Discussion Questions

8. What are some real-life reasons we refuse to confess our sins to God?
9. How does true repentance look like? If possible, share some examples of true repentance from your own life. (Do not share examples of someone else sinning against you. Share about your own sin.) Also, share examples from your life of what repentance is not.
10. Read verse 6. What does it say about God's wrath for all people? (A hint would be a connection with the "great waters").
11. Read Psalm 32:7, 1 John 1:9 and John 21:15-19. What does the Bible say about God forgiving our sins? What are the promises we receive from God in the area of forgiveness of our sin and repentance?
12. Read verse 9. Explain why the psalmist uses the analogy of the mule to describe the persons who do not want to confess their sins.
13. There are groups of triplets that the psalmist is using throughout the text. Can you identify them and see the main ideas for each group?



Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven

Discussion Questions

14. Finish Bible Study by reading the following confession as a group together.

Celebrant:

Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Congregation:

And blessed be His kingdom, now and forever.

Amen.

Celebrant:

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.

Congregation:

His mercy endures forever.

Celebrant:

Let us humbly confess our sins unto Almighty God.

Silence

Celebrant and Congregation:

*Most holy and merciful Father,
We confess to you and to one another,
that we have sinned against you
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.*

*We have not loved you with our
whole heart and mind and strength.
We have not fully loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We have not always had in us the mind of Christ.*

*You alone know how often we have grieved you
by wasting your gifts, by wandering from your ways.
Forgive us, we pray to you, most merciful Father;
And free us from our sin.
Renew in us the grace and strength of your Holy Spirit,
for the sake of Jesus Christ your Son our Savior.
Amen.*



Prayer & Praise

Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

Prayer Requests

Praise Reports



Learning Prayer Through Psalms

*Praying through
the Fray
Psalm 77*

August 1



Praying through the Fray

Psalm 77

- 1 I cry aloud to God, aloud to God, and he will hear me.
- 2 In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord; in the night my hand is stretched out without wearying; my soul refuses to be comforted.
- 3 When I remember God, I moan; when I meditate, my spirit faints. Selah
- 4 You hold my eyelids open; I am so troubled that I cannot speak.
- 5 I consider the days of old, the years long ago.
- 6 I said, "Let me remember my song in the night; let me meditate in my heart." Then my spirit made a diligent search:
- 7 "Will the Lord spurn forever, and never again be favorable?
- 8 Has his steadfast love forever ceased? Are his promises at an end for all time?
- 9 Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has he in anger shut up his compassion?" Selah
- 10 Then I said, "I will appeal to this, to the years of the right hand of the Most High."
- 11 I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your wonders of old.
- 12 I will ponder all your work, and meditate on your mighty deeds.
- 13 Your way, O God, is holy. What god is great like our God?
- 14 You are the God who works wonders; you have made known your might among the peoples.
- 15 You with your arm redeemed your people, the children of Jacob and Joseph. Selah
- 16 When the waters saw you, O God, when the waters saw you, they were afraid; indeed, the deep trembled.
- 17 The clouds poured out water; the skies gave forth thunder; your arrows flashed on every side.
- 18 The crash of your thunder was in the whirlwind; your lightnings lighted up the world; the earth trembled and shook.
- 19 Your way was through the sea, your path through the great waters; yet your footprints were unseen.
- 20 You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Praying through the Fray

In Psalm 77 the Psalmist asks, “Has his steadfast love forever ceased? Are his promises at an end for all time?” Perhaps you have been there. Perhaps you are there now.

How do you pray when your circumstances scream to you that God is not for you? How do you boldly approach the throne of grace when it feels as if the way is shut? How do you TALK to God when you are “so troubled that you cannot speak?” You turn to the Psalms and listen. You hear the heart pains of a psalmist that mirror your own. You slowly watch the psalmist’s pains turn to praise, which in turn invite you to appeal to God and remember His deeds of old. In other words, you don’t sit passively by and allow your feelings to lead. You FIGHT for joy!

Fighting with you,

Pastor TJ



You led your people

Discussion Questions

1. What is the most memorable event in your family that you celebrate every year or talk about at family gatherings?
2. Scan this and you will see some information on Asaph and who he was in the history of Israel:



What are the things that stood out to you about him? Can you describe the times Asaph lived in?

3. Psalm 77 is a psalm of communal lament. How would you characterize psalms of lament in general? What are the examples of nations lamenting in our days?
4. As you look at Psalm 77, compare the actions of the psalmist to his feelings.
5. Read verses 5 and 6. How does the psalmist seek to realign his stubborn soul?
6. Have you ever had a time in your life when your prayers and your feelings did not align? How did you deal with it? Share with the group.



You led your people

Discussion Questions

7. Read verses 7 to 15. How does the psalmist describe God and His character? What are those characteristics based on?
8. In your own life, when you go through times of lament, what are the attributes of God that have been most helpful in remembering His faithfulness?
9. Share examples of God's faithfulness from your own life. Share about something that God has done for you before, and you are sure He will do it again in your life.
10. Read verses 16 to 20. What is the story in the history of Israel that the psalmist is referring to? As new covenant believers, how does this story find its fulfillment in Jesus?
11. Read verse 20. Who does the psalmist say God is? What does it mean about persistence in our prayer?
12. Share about the times when God seems unseen in your life. Looking back, do you see God's hand working through for you?
13. Look to the structure of this psalm of lament. What example does it set for us on how you can pray to God in your lament?



You led your people

Discussion Questions

14. Read verse 20 - Aaron and Moses being the hand of the invisible God. Who in your life have acted like Moses or Aaron?
15. The psalm finishes with a strange ending - the proclamation of the fact of what God has done for the nation of Israel. If you think about your community, what important lesson can you take from the ending of this psalm?
16. Looking at the communal psalm of lament today, is there any action point that you can make with your presence in the community?



Prayer & Praise

You led your people

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

Prayer Requests

Praise Reports



Learning Prayer Through Psalms

*To Boldly Go
Psalm 67*

August 8



To Boldly Go

Psalm 67

1 May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, Selah
2 that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations.
3 Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you!
4 Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide the nations upon earth. Selah
5 Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you!
6 The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, shall bless us.
7 God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear him!

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The Psalms are the prayers of Jesus. These are the songs He sung. These are the prayers that are found on His lips. The Psalms are also prayers about Jesus. In other words, they find their fulfillment in Him. As Paul says, the promises of God find their yes and amen in Jesus. The New Testament writers were constantly quoting the Psalms to fix our gaze upon Jesus.

There are many Psalms that help us keep our prayers Jesus focused, but I have chosen Psalm 67 as the pinnacle of how we should pray. Every verse bleeds the blood and blessings of Jesus. Every word echoes the eternal praise of Jesus. It challenges us to fix our gaze upon Jesus as we pray for His Kingdom to come on the whole earth.

Singing for joy with you,

Pastor TJ



*May God be gracious to us*

## Discussion Questions

1. Do you have a facial expression that you are known for among your family, friends, or colleagues? What is the story behind it?
2. Look at the structure of the psalm by scanning the QR code. Read Rev 5:9-10. What is the main verse and main idea of Psalm 67?



3. Read Psalm 67:1, as well as 2 Corinthians 4:6 and Exodus 34:29. What does the phrase “make his face shine upon us” mean to you?
4. Read Psalm 67:3 as well as Genesis 12:2-3. What was the ultimate goal for God to bless Abraham?
5. In what ways has God blessed you and how are you (can you) using that blessing to make God known among the nations? What does it look like for God to bless people in the city we live in? When God blesses us, how does it look to turn His blessing into the opportunity to bless others?



*May God be gracious to us*

## Discussion Questions

6. Read Matthew 5:3-11 and Ephesians 1:3-6. How do the New Testament writers understand the “blessing” of the Lord? What are some current wrong understandings of blessings that some Christians hold to?
7. Read Psalm 67:4. How does the Bible describe life in God’s Kingdom as we submit to His Kingship and what does that look like in our life on earth now and future life in eternity? Read additional verses from Isaiah 2:4, Isaiah 11:3-4 and Romans 1:1-5.
8. Read Psalm 67:7, Psalm 5:7, Psalm 15:4, Psalm 25:14. What do you think the phrase “fear him” means? How do you apply the fear of the Lord to the way you read Scripture?
9. In Psalm 67:7 the psalmist says let “all the ends of the earth” fear the Lord. What do you think is your role in spreading God’s blessing to the ends of the earth? How does this look for you living in Beijing, China in 2021?
10. In what ways does Psalm 67 challenge or confront your current prayer life?



## Prayer & Praise

*May God be gracious to us*

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

### Prayer Requests

### Praise Reports